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October 7, 1981
TWO DOLLARS

Implement & Tractor

The business magazine of the farm & industrial equipment industry

INSIDE SHORTLINES: DEALERS TELL ALL IN I&T SURVEY

page 12

Previewing Las Vegas Conventions of FEWA, FEMA, AIMRA

page 16

In the I&T Manufacturers Edition
The pay picture for farm equipment engineers

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Implement&Tractor

The business magazine of the farm & industrial equipment industry

in this issue...

12: **Dealers' Attitudes About Shortlines.** An I&T survey shows shortlines have come a long way in dealers' eyes, but some important concerns are financing packages and trade territories.

15: **Dealer Comments on Shortlines.** Our survey on shortlines brought in some revealing remarks about shortline products. Here is a cross-section of the comments received.

16: **FEWA, FEMA and AIMRA Return to Las Vegas.** I&T previews the programs and events for the annual conventions of the Farm Equipment Wholesalers Assn., Farm Equipment Manufacturers Assn., and the Agricultural & Industrial Manufacturers Representatives Assn. to be held Nov. 8-11 in Las Vegas.

26: **FEMA's Seal of Quality Program.** The Seal of Quality means various things to different people, depending on whether you are a manufacturer, dealer or consumer. I&T presents some viewpoints, followed by a listing of shortliners who have qualified to use the seal on their products.

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what's ahead...

I&T SINCE 1886

October 7, 1981

U.S. RETAIL SALES IN AUGUST returned to their generally dreary postures after some strong performances in July, according to the Farm & Industrial Equipment Institute's flash report. One exception was in combines, which were up for the month and are up for the year to date. Another was four-wheel-drive tractors. The strength shown in July was attributed to particularly intense price discounting by manufacturers to cut inventories and thereby reduce their interest costs. The full report:

	Unit Retail Sales					
	August			January-August		
	1981	1980	Pct. Change	1981	1980	Pct. Change
Farm Wheel Tractors:						
2-wheel drive						
40-100 hp	3,431	3,464	- 1.0	35,897	40,397	-11.1
Over 100 hp	3,027	3,486	-13.2	27,860	30,773	- 9.5
Total 2-wheel drive	6,458	6,950	- 7.1	63,757	71,170	-10.4
4-wheel-drive	645	604	+ 6.8	6,409	6,233	+ 2.8
Total Tractors	7,103	7,554	- 6.0	70,166	77,403	- 9.3
Combines (S-P)	2,410	2,115	+13.9	13,077	11,602	+12.7
Balers*	1,461	1,750	-16.5	10,695	10,763	- 0.6
Forage Harvesters**	879	972	- 9.6	3,990	4,747	-15.9
Mower Conditioners	1,808	1,999	- 9.6	14,672	14,680	- 0.1

*Bales under 200 lbs. **Shear-bar type.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO PRODUCE CROPS? USDA's Economic Research Service has built tables showing how much it cost to produce an acre or a bushel of corn, wheat, soybeans, and other crops, showing two figures for each--excluding land and including land--for 1981 (projected) and the three previous years. Some examples:

Corn--In 1979, $1.62 per bushel excluding land, $2.12 with land cost; in 1981, $2.38/bu. excluding land; $3.11 with land cost.

Wheat--In 1979, $2.79/bu. ex. land, $3.72/bu. land included; in 1981, $4.13/bu. ex. land, $5.32/bu. with land.

Soybeans--In 1979, $3.60/bu. ex. land, $5.15/bu. with land; in 1981, $4.97/bu. ex. land, $7.41/bu. without.

Rice--In 1979, $7.08/cwt. ex. land, $8.30/cwt. with land; in 1981, $9.94/cwt ex. land, $11.51/cwt. with land.

Cotton--In 1979, 63.3¢/lb. ex. land, 72.2¢/lb. with land; in 1981, 89.8¢/lb. ex. land, $1.01/lb. with land.

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I&T *survey probes*

DEALERS' ATTITUDES ABOUT SHORTLINES

The verdict: They've come a long way in dealers' eyes, but there's still abundant ground to cover. Strength shown in such areas as reliability, communicating with dealers, pricing and margins. Important concerns: financing packages, trade territories.

By Bill Fogarty

■EVERY YEAR, when October 7 rolls around, I&T takes a look at some facet of the shortline end of this business. This year, we thought it would be good to get a dealer viewpoint of the shortline product and the people who bring it to him.

Sounds simple. Cook up the questions, send them to dealers. Tally the results and print them.

The problem starts with definition. What is a shortline product? What makes one company a long-line company and another a shortliner? Some majors make only one or two product lines and have other manufacturers make a few allied products for them, but they are called long-line.

Some manufacturers called "shortline" out of custom have grown to a point at which they are comparable with the bottom end of the major scale.

And some companies are true shortliners, by anyone's definition.

Thus, when we sent our survey form to dealers, we asked them to supply their own definition. Risky? Perhaps, but people in this industry have been talking about shortline manufacturers for many years, and there is a general understanding of the term.

Second part of the problem: We had to ask dealers to generalize their answers about shortline companies. The questions were spiced with modifiers like "frequently," "often," "generally," "sometimes," "usually," and so on.

This was done in spite of the fact that there are hundreds of shortline manufacturers. Even the most experienced dealer could only have experience with a handful of them. And a dealer who has had experience with only two would have had to balance out his opinion between them in answering our query.

Thus, we took this survey knowing that its findings would have to be interpreted carefully to have any value. For instance, we asked dealers to agree or disagree with the statement that the shortliner (or distributor) usually has adequate service backup, including training. Forty-two per cent agreed or strongly agreed. Forty-nine per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

To us, this indicates that most shortline producers at least need to review their own level of service performance, in comparison with other shortliners, with major manufacturers and—most important—with dealers' expectations.

Another statement: "Compared with long-line products, shortliners' products are generally less reliable."

Twenty-six per cent of dealers agreed with that. Another 22 per cent said there was no difference. And 51 per cent disagreed. To us, that means that reliability efforts of shortliners have been paying off. But considering that dealers have indicated in other surveys that their major suppliers are far from perfect, shortliners have a way to go, too.

The survey threw seven agree-disagree statements at dealers about shortline brands in comparison with long-liners. There were 11 other ones that dealt with shortline products alone. But in considering the responses to these, it is prudent to bear in mind that the dealer's experience with all his suppliers comes into play.

For instance, "Shortline products generally produce an attractive profit margin" found 52 per cent of dealers in agreement and 38 per cent disagreeing. Only nine per cent indicated no opinion. Considering that most responding dealers have experience with the profit margins obtained with long-line products, a comparison probably took place in their minds as they answered.

I&T mentioned to a pair of veteran shortline advocates that 55 per cent of dealers said they *disagreed* with this one: "Shortline suppliers generally give the dealer more trade territory on a line than the major supplier does." Thirty per cent agreed with it; the rest had no opinion.

"That's a complete surprise to me," said one. Another was surprised at first, but on thinking it over, said he was aware that some salesmen habitually overcrowd their territories, usually to their regret.

Survey background

I&T sent questionnaires to 1200 dealers and got back 218 usable responses. Of the respondents, 28 per cent had total equipment sales volumes under $1 million in the past 12 months. Another 34 per cent had volumes from $1 million to $2 million. Twenty-one per cent were from $2 million to $3 million and 17 per cent were over $3 million.

Shortline volume. We asked dealers to tell us what per cent of their volume came from sales of shortlines and shortline parts. Here's what they reported:

Pct. of Sales Volume from Shortlines	Pct. of Dealers Responding
1-9%	21%
10-14	21
15-19	9
20-29	18
30-44	18
45-59	7
60+	6
	100%

These dealers were asked to indicate if this percentage had changed to any degree up or down over the past five years. Fifty-eight per cent of the dealers said the level stayed about the same. Another 24 per cent said the shortline share of volume was higher today; 16 per cent said it was down.

Shortline inventory. We asked dealers if high interest rates had forced them to reduce their shortline inventories. Not surprisingly, 87 per cent said yes; 13 per cent said they had not. Going beyond that, we asked those who had cut to indicate how much they had cut their shortlines "below normal levels."

(More...)

Shortline Products, Sales and Marketing Services: Dealers Give Their Views

Statement	How Dealers Reacted (per cent of replies) Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Quality of shortliners' literature, manuals for assembly, repair, owners is generally okay.	3	50	4	38	4
Shortliner (or distributor) usually has adequate service backup, including training.	2	40	9	43	6
Shortline products' appearance often deteriorates too fast, makes selling harder.	10	40	15	32	3
Shortline firm (or distributor) usually has attractive co-op advertising program.	2	35	13	41	8
Some shortline products carry a thing called the Seal of Quality. This is important when considering a new product.	1	22	39	33	4
Shortline manufacturers usually maintain good two-way communications with dealers.	5	53	10	30	1
Distributor sales reps usually know the products in their catalog sufficiently.	5	68	6	18	3
Distributor sales reps usually understand the needs of farmers in the specific dealer's area.	3	43	18	33	3
Shortline manufacturers are less innovative than they used to be.	1	31	39	29	0
Shortline products generally produce an attractive profit margin.	4	48	9	34	4
If the shortline product is good, farmers don't care if it is made overseas or in North America.	5	43	15	35	2

Shortlines Survey *(continued)*

Pct. Inventory Cut Below Normal Level	Per Cent of Dealers Who Cut Inventory
1-20%	20%
21-39	26
40-59	39
60-100	15
	100%

Thirty per cent of these dealers said they cut shortline inventory by half. A couple of dealers said they cut their shortlines by 100 per cent. This, of course, takes us back to the problem of definition of shortlines, but this reporter has yet to find a dealership that gets *literally* everything from one supplier.

How did shortline inventory cuts compare with reductions in long-line inventories? Fifty-five per cent of these dealers said their cuts were about the same for both long-line and shortline. Another 38 per cent cut a bigger percentage of their shortlines than they cut majors' supplies. And 7 per cent cut more major-line inventory than shortlines.

The question that is of intense concern to shortline manufacturers is, what will it take to persuade dealers to begin restocking inventories? The answer is almost always, lower interest rates—but how much lower?

So we asked dealers, "About how low will interest rates have to be for you to feel encouraged to restock shortlines to your normal levels?"

Shortlines and Long-lines: Dealers Evaluate Seven Statements

Statement	How Dealers Reacted (per cent of replies) Strongly Agree	Agree	No Difference or No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Long-line supplier generally has more attractive financing packages than shortline manufacturers.	39	52	4	4	1
Long-line manufacturer's man knows as much about his firm's products as shortliner's representative knows about his.	14	47	12	23	3
When a dealer carries a shortline much like one the major firm markets, there is sometimes pressure to drop the shortline.	10	52	15	22	1
Shortline suppliers generally give the dealer more trade territory on a line than the major supplier does.	4	26	14	45	10
Compared with long-line products, shortliners' products are generally less reliable.	3	23	22	47	4
Shortline product parts service is generally as good as or better than long-line firm's parts service.	1	22	15	48	13
Shortline products are generally priced lower than competing long-line products.	10	57	12	19	1

Seven out of ten dealers (72 per cent) said the interest rates would have to be from 10 to 12 per cent before they'd be restocking at former normal levels. A small fraction (7.5 per cent) said they were waiting until the rates were somewhere between 5 and 9 per cent. The remaining dealers (20 per cent) expected to be back in the game with interest rates between 13 and 15 per cent. And one respondent glumly scribbled, "Probably never" on this part of the return.

Calling on dealers

It has often been said that a key reason for shortliners holding their own in the marketplace is that their salesmen work their territories with great intensity. So we asked dealers to estimate how many in-person calls they or their sales managers get, in a typical month, from sales reps for shortline products (in-

(Continued on page 47)

We don't normally do this, but...

When I&T staffers put one of these exclusive reports together, we like to keep it under wraps until publication date so we can surprise everybody. But as we reviewed the early results of our survey among dealers, we leaked our findings to Harold Halter, executive vice-president of the Farm Equipment Manufacturers Assn. His responses indicated surprise and pleasure on some matters and resolute acceptance on others. In a few cases, he indicated he felt that the dealers were just plain wrong.

Example: "With the rest of the world paying farm loan rates as high as 150 per cent, the feeling among dealers that they won't restock shortline inventories to normal levels until rates drop to 10-12 per cent is a pipe dream. They'll return when farmers decide the interest rate is consistent with commodity prices, and some people believe this is around 16 per cent."

Halter said he wasn't surprised at dealers' views about shortline profit margins, problems with appearance and literature. The strong showing for overseas-made products "really surprised me; I thought that 'made in U.S.A.' was more important." He said that one of the most pleasant surprises was the number of calls shortline sales representatives were making.

Halter concluded: "Obviously, some of the (dealer) attitudes hurt, but it's better to know what resistance we face than to go blissfully on, assuming that we're the greatest....Ask the same questions five years from now, and we'll do better!"

Our study produced these DEALER COMMENTS

In most I&T editorial surveys, we leave a little room at the end of the questionnaire for respondents to write in some thoughts, amplifications, objections and general comments. Here is a cross-section of what came in.

"It is easier to make good profits on shortlines. Today with large ticket items being somewhat slower, shortliners can help keep things going."

"I like the way shortline manufacturers treat me. Longline tends to take me for granted or even worse. Shortliners give me the impression that I am somebody special."

"The shortline product itself is not as important as is the distributor for it. We buy from the distributors that give us good service."

"Shortliners usually lead the way with many new methods and machines several years before the major lines design and engineer a similar machine."

"This survey was unfortunately general enough to group all shortline companies together. Many of our shortline suppliers (e.g. Krause, Lindsay, Herman) have excellent sales and service backup, as well as good co-op advertising help. Other shortlines, the majority of ones that walk in our door, are poor help and should be tossed out the door."

"Generally we don't get terms with shortline products, which would provide time to market products before they come due. We need more service people from all companies we do business with."

"It is hard to make money on shortline implements as everyone carries them. For some dealers who sell them, making $100 on a deal is really doing something. They tell the purchaser the dealer down the road has parts and service. We only service what *we sell*, not other dealers. I am a John Deere dealer."

"We are well satisfied with the product and service from our shortline supplier. They are close to our dealership to save us freight and we can get parts in a short time. Their sales people and service people are knowledgeable and they are nice to do business with."

"When money is tight dealers cannot afford to risk their major line by putting more dollars into shortlines. Terms and discount

(Continued on page 51)

Shortlines Survey

(Continued from page 15)

cluding distributor salesmen).

As you might expect, replies ranged all over the map. Five per cent of dealers set it at one call. One dealer told us that *50* calls a month were typical. Another said 40. (Neither said that all 40 or 50 callers actually got in to see the dealer or sales manager!)

The most frequent mentions among dealers were six calls (15 per cent), 10 calls (14 per cent), four calls (11 per cent), five calls (10 per cent), three calls (9 per cent), and eight calls (8 per cent). If we disregard the two dealers who need revolving doors, it averages out to between seven and eight shortline sales calls a month.

How about calls from long-line manufacturers' sales and marketing people? We asked, indicating that service personnel were not to be included.

Almost all correspondents got from one to four calls a month from their major suppliers. One call—19 per cent; two calls—38 per cent; three calls—15 per cent; four calls—17 per cent.

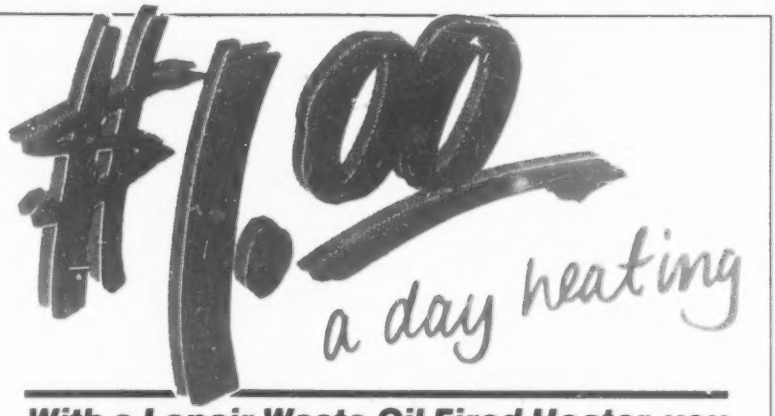
One dealer told us he gets 15 long-line visits a month. Another said 18 and a third said 20. We can only speculate: (a) They are located in a branch-house town; (b) these are superdealers of super value to their suppliers; or (c) they must be in big trouble.

Too broad?

Was I&T's shortline survey too ambitious? Was it too much to take all but a handful of the industry's manufacturers and lump them into a single category? A few dealers complained about this in their comments. "Could have given better answers if you had told us which definition of shortline to use," said one.

But setting up a precise definition of a shortline manufacturer to which dealers would have had to adhere probably would have killed the survey. And we felt the survey needed taking.

We think we have shed some light with this study, and perhaps we have blown away a few myths. We are certain we have given everybody—long-line firms, shortliners, distributors and dealers—some thoughts to ponder. □



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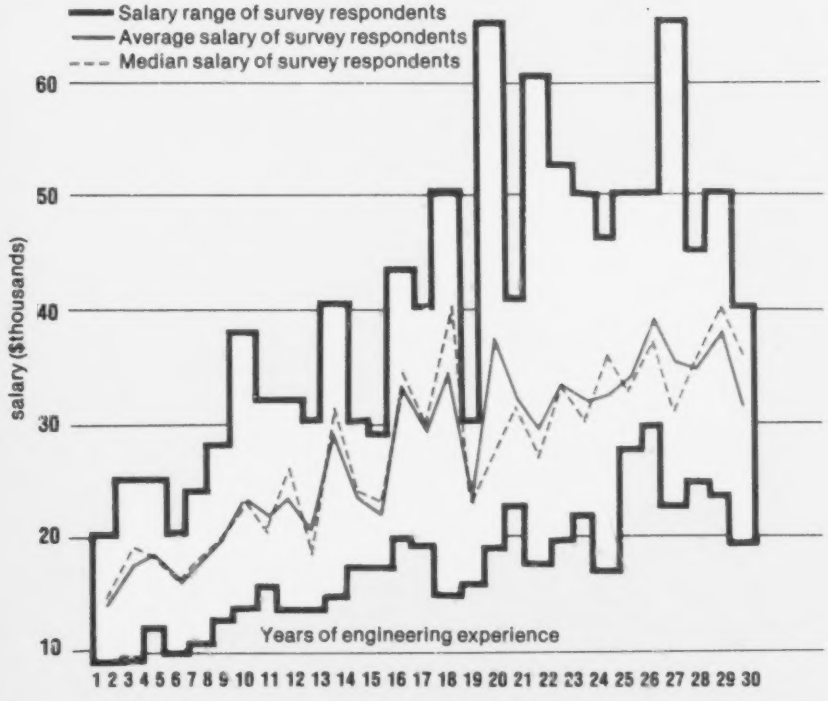
Circle (27) on Reply Card

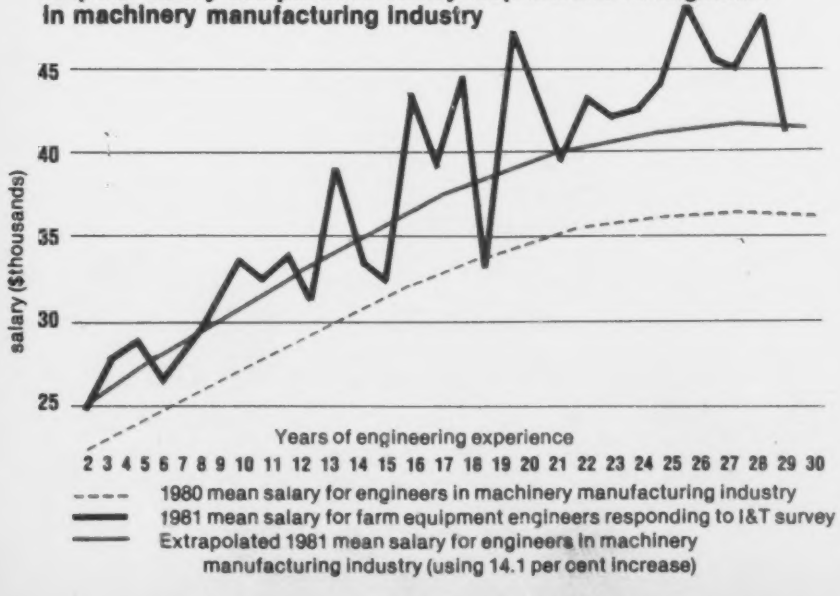
The pay picture for farm equipment engineers

By Chuck McMurray

Graph 1. Salary/experience comparison


Salary range of survey respondents
Average salary of survey respondents
Median salary of survey respondents
salary ($thousands)
60
50
40
30
20
10
Years of engineering experience
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

Graph 2. Salary comparison: Survey respondents vs engineers in machinery manufacturing industry


salary ($thousands)
45
40
35
30
25
Years of engineering experience
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
1980 mean salary for engineers in machinery manufacturing industry
1981 mean salary for farm equipment engineers responding to I&T survey
Extrapolated 1981 mean salary for engineers in machinery manufacturing industry (using 14.1 per cent increase)

Survey shows farm equipment engineers faring well compared to colleagues in most other industries

■THE FIGURES are in, and the farm boys are doing OK! That's what our survey results say.

Earlier this summer I&T mailed questionnaires to nearly 1000 engineers working for farm equipment manufacturers. In one area of inquiry, we asked them to tell us, anonymously, the number of years of engineering experience they had, their current salary, the per cent their salary changed over the past five years, and their highest level of education. Our final tally showed the return mails had provided us with slightly less than 300 completed returns containing usable answers.

Sizeable salary spread

The experience of our respondents ranged from the neophyte engineer in the second year at his first position to the veteran with more than 40 years on the job. For purposes of our report, we eliminated those returns with longevity exceeding 30 years and those with job titles indicating primary responsibility in areas other than engineering. Even then we found a salary spread of nearly $50,000 at some longevity points. We suspect the extremely high salaries included bonuses.

The salaries ranged from slightly below $20,000 to $75,000. Graph 1 shows the average and median salaries plotted according to experience. The sawtooth characteristic of the curve is attributed to the small sample. A

(More...)

Graph 3. Salary increase over past five-year period

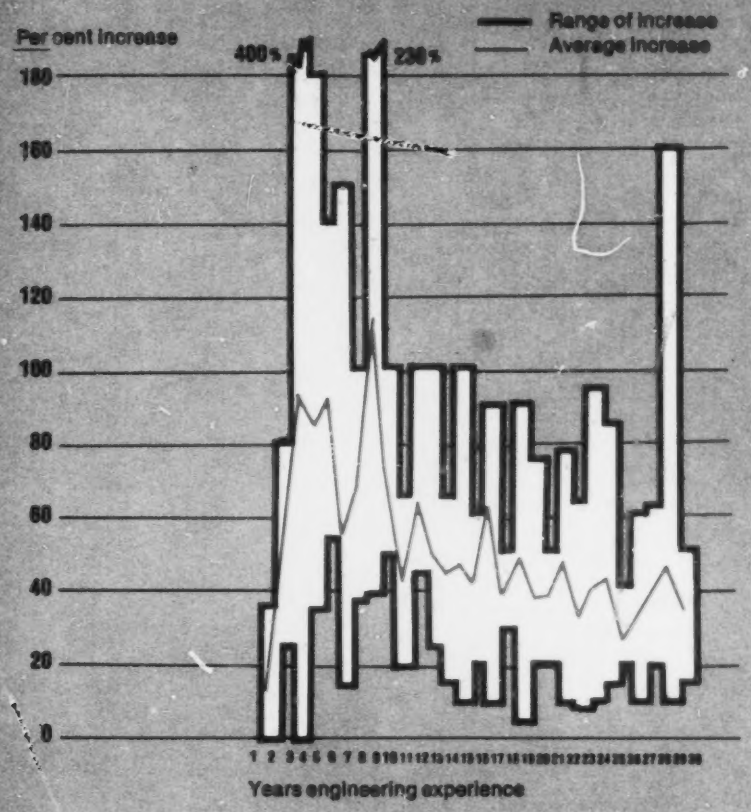


Table 1. Average salary advantage of advanced degrees over bachelor degree.

Experience	Per cent with advance degrees	Avg salary advantage
less than 5	20	$2,130
5 through 9	42	$3,910
10 through 14	24	$4,880
15 through 19	33	$5,440
20 through 24	26	$3,860
25 through 30	20	$5,550

Salaries

(continued)

smooth curve drawn through the points of the average-salary curve would yield a nearly linear curve rising at the rate of approximately $750 per year of experience.

Favorable comparison

Is this relatively small sample truly representative of salary levels among farm equipment engineers? This concern led us to the American Association of Engineering Societies.

One AAES project is an annual survey of engineering salaries, covering many disciplines, functions, and other variables. At this writing, that project was not yet complete for 1981, but a determination had been made that salaries for engineers working in the machinery manufacturing industry (a category that included farm machinery companies) had risen an average of 14.1 per cent in the past year. Graph 2 shows the 1980 average salaries for these engineers (as reported by AAES), and I&T's projected curve of the 1981 salary averages constructed by applying the 14.1 per cent increase to the 1980 figures. As can be seen, the projected curve compares closely with the curve plotted from the average-salary data of the I&T survey of farm equipment engineers.

Five-year increase

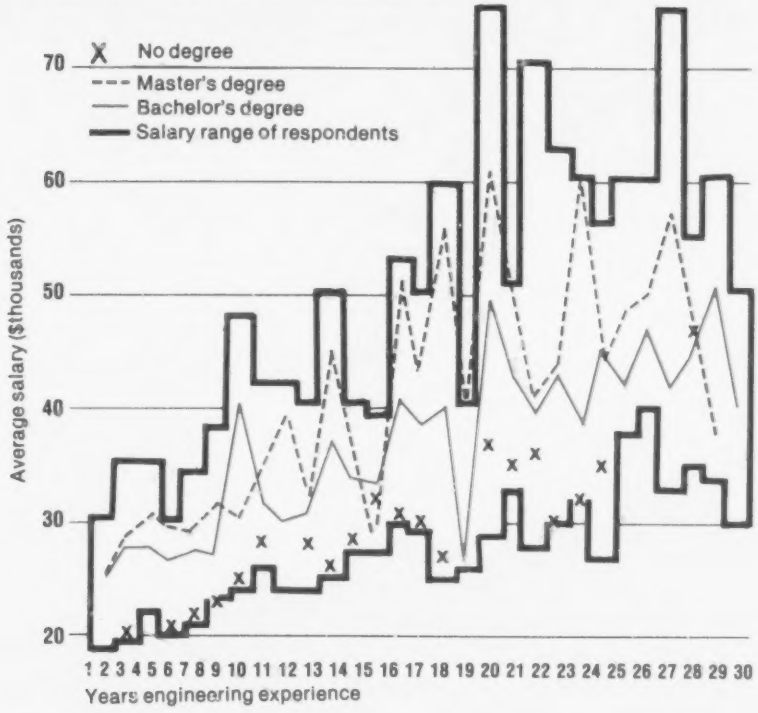
Survey data on salary increase over the past five years showed a definite trend. Engineers with less than five years' experience reported increases from zero to 400 per cent. The increases for those with more than five years' experience ranged from a low of six per cent to a high of 230 per cent. Graph 3 is a plot of the average of the five-year increases reported by respondents to the I&T questionnaire. A smoothed curve drawn between the points of this curve would show that the average increase over the past five years for those at the five-year point would be about 85 per cent. As longevity increases, the five-year increases would drop off in a nearly linear fashion to about 30 per cent for those at the 25- to 30-year point.

Education and dollars

The influence of education on salary is very evident in the data plotted in graph 4. Despite the small sample size, the difference in average salary between those with less than a college education, those with a bachelor's degree, and those with an advanced degree is clear. For the respondents to the I&T survey, table 1 lists the average

(More...)

Graph 4. Education/salary comparison


No degree
Master's degree
Bachelor's degree
Salary range of respondents
Average salary ($thousands)
70
60
50
40
30
20
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
Years engineering experience

Salaries
(continued)

salary advantage the engineers with advanced degrees hold over those with only bachelor degrees.

Annual increase

According to a source at the American Association of Engineering Societies, the figures for 1981 show the average annual salary increase for all engineering disciplines to be 9.6 per cent. This is well below the 14.1 per cent reported for engineers in the machinery manufacturing industry, of which the farm equipment industry is a part.

The average salary increase over the past five years was approximately 53.8 per cent for the survey respondents. That approximates an annual 9 per cent increase compounded for the five-year period, a figure which lagged the rate of inflation for that period, but which exceeded the rate of salary increase realized in most industries.

Yes, all in all, the farm equipment guys have held their own. □

Lots of smart companies have high blood pressure control programs. What about yours?

Uncontrolled high blood pressure is a national health problem. About 26 million workdays and billons of dollars are lost each year because of it.

But high blood pressure can be easily detected *and* controlled. Proper treatment, every day, can prevent heart failure, kidney disease, stroke and premature death caused by high blood pressure.

Many companies, large and small, have successful on-the-job high blood pressure programs for their employees and management. Look into it. You can save time and money. And protect your employees' health. To find out the whole story write:

Ms. Judie LaRosa
Worksetting Program Coordinator
National High Blood Pressure Education Program
Bethesda, MD 20205

High blood pressure. Treat it and live.

National High Blood Pressure Education Program
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services